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—Nat Hentoff

THE
Commonweal

Reflections on Poverty

In an Age of Many Fears

by Julian Marias

Heavy Weather Ahead

The Maritime Strike

by Tom Brooks

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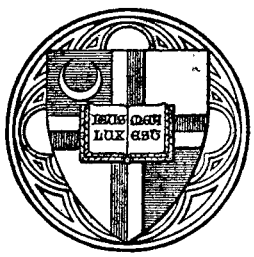

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THE
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A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-SEVENTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

OUR FIRMER STANCE

PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S sober speech on Berlin clearly sought to strengthen the morale of the free world without arousing widespread feelings of alarm. For the United States and its allies to give way to bristling Soviet demands at Berlin, or elsewhere, is unthinkable. Yet the ultimate choice has lain between either yielding or resorting to a nuclear deterrent that would devastate the earth. American potentialities for negotiation with the Soviets have been constricted by the fearfulness of such a choice. The possibility of a third alternative is therefore more than welcome.

The increases planned for our conventional armed forces are moderate in proportion, as are the new expenditures so promptly and enthusiastically voted by Congress. Mr. Khrushchev's persistent belligerence has finally led to a strengthening of our military defenses that should have begun months ago. He has made a hike in expenditures for non-nuclear arms appear reasonable not only to the American people but also to this nation's allies and even among the uncommitted countries —particularly as the President's call for armament was coupled with a strong reiteration of America's willingness to negotiate.

No observer would hold that the plans now developing within our defense establishment will shortly enable even all the NATO powers together to match the Soviet ground forces which would be available if war should break out over Berlin. But the building up of our conventional forces, especially if our European allies follow suit, will make a Soviet or East German armed *coup* much more risky. And the growing unrest reported from Russia's East European satellites would somewhat offset its superiority in conventional arms.

The conviction that Soviet Russia now has too much to lose to risk a nuclear war over Berlin carries over to some extent to conventional warfare. When the Kremlin realizes that the West is able to offer more than token resistance, it will become more hesitant about risking outright hostilities, even over Germany.

THE DEFENSE PROGRAM outlined by Mr. Kennedy will also enable American forces to deal more effectively with the armed subversion and guerrilla warfare at which the Communists are so adept—as in Laos and South Vietnam. Campaigns of this type and dimension can easily lead to "brushfire" wars. This country has been handicapped in dealing with such operations because of the few mobile divisions available. The creation of a larger American mobile striking force will make it more possible to take steps in defense of peace wherever threatened, preferably in conjunction with allies or under the *aegis* of the United Nations.

Greater combat readiness will require a new state of mind on the part of the American people. Many of the measures called for so far will contribute to that: the larger contingents of draftees, the longer stints and greater availability of reservists, further unbalancing of the budget and the likelihood of higher taxes. All these should serve as indications that we mean business. But it is unquestionably true that if we are successfully to meet the Soviet challenge, even that of continuing coexistence, we shall have to make still greater sacrifies than those indicated by President Kennedy the other evening.

On the negotiating itself, which a stronger defense establishment will make feasible, there are two chief schools of thought. One stresses the importance of merely entering into serious negotiations. According to this view, such a parley will

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consume so much time and have so calming an effect that it will succeed in freezing the status quo for many months. Assuredly there are worse prospects than a continuation of the present set-up in Berlin and in Germany.

If, on the other hand, our negotiating from strength should produce certain water-tight agreements with the Soviet Union not involving any harmful concessions, that would be still better. The identification of NATO firmness with hostility to any change is anything but happy in a world of emerging colonial peoples for whom change is of the essence. But whether Mr. Khrushchev envisages any acceptable modifications of present arrangements or not, a more flexible and effective American defense force, coupled with renewed national determination, is a prerequisite for entering into full-fledged negotiations.

THE BOWLES AFFAIR

LIKE A GOOD many other people, we suppose, we have been left with a vague feeling of uneasiness by the Chester Bowles affair—an uneasiness compounded by the difficulty of getting hold of very many hard facts in the matter.

Things started out in a familiar Washington pattern. People—formless, faceless people, usually identified with the Dean Acheson "hard line" policy—were, it was said, unhappy with Bowles. Plans to oust him from his post as Number Two man in the State Department were almost final, and an announcement could be expected momentarily.

At this point Mr. Bowles' friends began their counterattack, tipping off friendly newspapermen to what was afoot. Soon news dispatches and assorted columns began to appear, all commenting on the unhappy fate in store for the leading architect of the 1960 Democratic platform, foreign policy adviser to Mr. Kennedy during the campaign and one-time possibility as Secretary of State.

Public reaction to these items was anguished and swift. The Bowles forces, it seemed, had drawn at least second blood. The next time around, then, the anti-Bowles forces retreated to a familiar but usually solid position. No one really questioned Mr. Bowles' ability as an idea man, the story went this time; the trouble was that he was just no good as an administrator.

Normally, this last is a good and unanswerable ploy. Who can argue very convincingly from the outside that Mr. X is in fact a great administrator? This time, though, the line did not go down so well. Mr. Bowles is, after all, not Mr. X. He is a well-known figure, a self-made millionaire who was able to turn to public service by the time he was thirty-five, a former Governor of Connecticut, a very successful Ambassador to India and Congressman-at-large fom his own state. The notion that it had been discovered at this date that he has no administrative talent was an odd one; indeed, the only thing odder was the suggestion that Mr. Bowles had been brought into the State Department as an administrator rather than as an idea man.

The discussion would not die, and a luncheon meeting of President Kennedy and Mr. Bowles was arranged. Afterward President Kennedy expressed deep admiration for Chester Bowles' abilities; at the same time he obviously left open the possibility that he might in the near future be offered some other post inside the Administration. There the matter stands at this writing, with Mr. Bowles away from Washington on a long-scheduled round of conferences overseas.

To say that the Administration has painted itself into a corner on the Bowles affair might be something of an exaggeration, but not much. Mr. Bowles has the confidence and respect of what is generally termed the liberal wing of the Democratic party; indeed, his early allegiance to Mr. Kennedy helped to win over many Stevenson supporters. In recent weeks persistent reports have it that he was one of the few top-level people in the Administration to counsel against the Cuba fiasco. No doubt it was embarrassing that this information reached the press; nonetheless, the Kennedy Administration will have a hard time now persuading very many people that its quarrel with Chester Bowles is due to the fact that he is a poor administrator. Too many people, we think, will be reminded of the story of the Hollywood mogul who insisted that he did not want yes-men around him; he wanted men who are willing to say no and be fired for their pains. The story is an old one; we hope it is not unfamiliar to Mr. Kennedy.

"TRAGIC AND REGRETTABLE"

FRANCE's spokesman at the United Nations has described the outburst of violence between France and Tunisia as "tragic and regrettable." Tunisia's President Habib Bourguiba has himself called it "stupid." In the face of such unanimity of feeling—joined in, needless to say, by the rest of the world—it might seem hard to understand how the unfortunate conflict could have come about. Actually, the steps in the French-Tunisian disagreement are easy to trace; the way into the present dilemma, as is so often the case, seems a good deal clearer than the way out.

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President de Gaulle and President Bourguiba are both to blame for the deterioration of relations between their countries, for the loss of life and human suffering that resulted from the flareup at Bizerte, for the many and serious consequences of this "little war" to France, to North Africa and to the prosecution of the not-so-cold war.

It can be said immediately that de Gaulle had the responsibility of honoring his own promises to re-negotiate the status of the French base at Bizerte. He should have recognized the priority of the principle of self-determination. He should have been able to understand the problems of President Bourguiba. He should have perceived the importance for all of Africa of Bourguiba's moderate road to independence, and should have repaid in better terms the patience, loyalty and help which the Tunisian leader has given in the past.

Having said this, however, it must be accepted that there is a vast difference between what de Gaulle —or any national leader—"should" have done and what in the situation he "could" have done. Oppressed by his troubles in Algeria, leading his people by force of will away from the dream of empire, conscious of the accumulated resentments of the *colons* in North Africa, faced by army commanders who will flirt with treason rather than accept further blows to their status in Africa, bound by his own doctrine of French *grandeur*—in these circumstances, de Gaulle's area of possible action was considerably smaller than it might appear.

The same is true of President Bourguiba. He "should" have been able to resist the nationalist, anti-colonial pressures of his countrymen to force the French out of Bizerte. He should not have fallen into the temptation of bolstering his sagging prestige in Africa by taking a bold stand against the French. He should have taken into account the feelings of the army commanders in Africa and the difficulty of controlling them from Paris. He should not have risked baiting the aging lion.

But again, what under the circumstances Bourguiba was free to do is not necessarily equivalent to what he should have done. The Tunisian leader was beset by anti-Western and anti-colonial forces which threatened to destroy his position of leadership by proving that he was only a "lackey" of the French. He had been given solemn and repeated promises that the base at Bizerte would be evacuated, at least one day, and the promises were not kept. The failure of his moderation to accomplish anything in removing the French from Tunisian soil was destroying not only the prestige of Bourguiba himself but the future prospects of "Bourguibism" in Africa, as opposed to the bellicose "anti-imperialism" stance adopted by the Algerians and, notably, Colonel Nasser of the United Arab Republic. The Tunisian leader felt he had to do something to convince the French, and his fellow-North Africans, that he meant business.

What he did, of course, was a mistake, a grievous and costly miscalculation. The savage response of France was obviously much more than he had bargained for, but now that the issue has been joined and Tunisian blood spilled, he can hardly back down from his challenge. What de Gaulle did was also a mistake, needless, callous and reckless, although it is as always hard to determine what orders were given to the French forces and how much was decided by the army itself.

At any rate, the "stupid" war erupted. Seven hundred lives have been lost, and an unknown number wounded. The stiff-necked response of President de Gaulle has further weakened the United Nations, at a time when its effectiveness is being seriously challenged by the U.S.S.R. The Western alliance, and NATO especially, have been divided and distracted in the face of the mounting difficulties over Berlin. The prospects for peace in Algeria have been dimmed even more.

As for Tunisia, President Bourguiba's power and position have been deeply shaken. The old and hopeful friendship between Tunisia and the West seems shattered, and Bourguibism discredited among the emergent nations. There is already evidence that the disaster he encountered on his moderate road may turn President Bourguiba himself not merely away from "neutrality for the West" and towards "neutral neutrality," but even in the direction of "Communist neutrality."

It can be hoped that the good sense and moderation President Bourguiba has shown so often in the past will come to the aid of the present unhappy situation. It can be hoped, too, if not counted on, that equal moderation will be shown by President de Gaulle, that he and France will be able to modify the fascination with self—the sense of *gloire,* if you will—that have made France so often the problem-child of the Western alliance.

Summer Schedule

In keeping with the usual practice of this and many other journals, The Commonweal is now publishing on a summer schedule, appearing in alternate weeks from the middle of July to the middle of September. Forthcoming issues of the magazine will be dated as follows: August 25, September 8, and September 22. From that point on The Commonweal will return to its normal weekly printing schedule.

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DEATH OF A WITNESS

WHITTAKER CHAMBERS died last month very much as he lived during the years when he was a Communist—quietly, hidden from the public gaze. Any man's death is sobering. For me, the fact that Whittaker Chambers' body had already been cremated before the press was even notified made his death seem infinitely sadder and more solitary.

In the weeks since Chambers' death the papers and magazines have not carried nearly as much in the way of post-mortems on the Hiss case as I would have expected. This was, after all, *the* trial of our time; Alistair Cooke even said that a generation was on trial. How explain the comparative lack of comment?

Some will say, I suppose, that liberal intellectuals in the publishing world are still reluctant to face up to the unpleasant facts in the Hiss case. Perhaps there is a little bit of this, but I doubt that very many now reject the essential truth of Whittaker Chambers' picture of Communist espionage. I am more inclined to think that many newspaper and magazine editors feel that everything there is to say about the Chambers-Hiss affair has already been said.

I can see how the Hiss case might by now seem a little like ancient history. Chambers accused Alger Hiss before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1948. This was only thirteen years ago, but history moves so fast these days that I think many newspaper readers were surprised not at Chambers' death but at the fact that he was still alive in July of 1961.

But Chambers was alive. The man who was the central figure in one of the great dramas of our time had had several heart attacks, and as far as I know he had written only a few magazine pieces in recent years. But he was there on the farm in Maryland he loved so much, almost forgotten and apparently relishing his obscurity—a fact which seems strangely out of character, unless he thought his work was finished.

He had some reason to believe this. If he hurt America and the world by his early service in the Communist apparatus, he was at least entitled to feel that in the end he had done his best to sound the alarm for those who still slept on.

There is no doubt, I think, that the national climate has changed a great deal since the Hiss trial. I suppose the change would have come about anyway; it is hard to see how the most determined innocence about Soviet intentions could persist in the face of events since 1950. But the fact remains that the Hiss case did serve as a kind of watershed in national opinion, and once it was over a good many illusions had gone with it.

This is not to say that those who are called the hard anti-Communists were right in those days. I don't think they were, any more than one can say that the John Birchers are right today. Any serious anti-Communist effort is always hurt by people who insist on behaving as if liberalism, socialism and Communism are one and the same thing, and this was true in 1948 as it is today. I thought Hiss was guilty, but one reason many people were originally slow in taking Chambers' accusations seriously was simply because "Wolf! Wolf!" had previously been cried too often and too recklessly.

After allowing for this fact, though, I think it is true that in 1948 there were still those inside and outside the government for whom the Communist threat remained a textbook thing, not quite real. Until the evidence became overwhelming, they regarded reports of Communist spy rings as fairy tales, fit only to drum up more circulation for the tabloids. Whittaker Chambers was the witness—to use the title he himself picked—who helped change all that.

Since Chambers' death, I have gone back and browsed again in things written about him at the time of the trial and particularly in his own still memorable apologia, *Witness*. In many ways, he was almost a classic example of the young man of the period who chose Marxism when his contemporaries were frolicking on the beaches and dance floors. A gifted and unusual product of a far-from-usual household, he was from youth onward a quester—a born believer, if you will. He always had that philosophical-theological bent which became so obvious in the later years of his life; he was never content simply to accept, to conform, but kept searching for explanation and purpose. And when he made his choice of Marxism, it was typical that Whittaker Chambers gave himself heart and soul, enduring poverty and hard work and finally disappearance into the murky underground of the Communist party, all in service of a religion without God.

It wasn't enough for him, though; sometimes life comes very close to the simple maxims of the catechism. Ultimately Chambers came to know and hate the evil in that which he had once served so eagerly. Eventually he was to say—simply, almost banally—that the trouble with Communism is that there is no room in it for God.

This is what Whittaker Chambers learned, and he was, of course, quite right. Like many Marxists and one-time Marxists, he became convinced that the great struggle of the future would be between Communists and ex-Communists, and in this I think he was wrong. But he saw his greatest role as one of witness for freedom, in a great struggle between Good and Evil. It was in this, as witness, that he made his contribution, and for this the world owes him thanks. May he rest in peace.

JAMES O'GARA.

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Reflections on Poverty

It is only in their relation to a pattern of life that wealth and poverty have any real meaning

by JULIAN MARIAS

IN OUR TIME there is an unacknowledged tendency to regard all things with fear. We are fearful of war—which seems natural enough—but also fearful of the conditions that would make war impossible. We are fearful of tyranny, but also, and perhaps even more, of liberty. We are assuredly fearful of love and of pleasure (that obsolete word) and of sex; the erotic books of our time are among the saddest. We are always afraid of falling ill, but we anxiously regard good health as "a temporary state leading to nothing good," according to the pessimists' definition—and we keep it under continual surveillance like any malefactor. Formerly we used to be afraid of misery, even of being poor, but since the possession of wealth in the West has ceased to be the exceptional lot of a very few individuals, the man of our time has begun to be fearful of wealth, too.

But what are poverty and wealth? Each is intelligible, of course, only in relation to the other. To speak simply of poverty or of wealth makes no sense. These terms do not mean simply the existence or possession of large or small quantities of goods. If that were the case there would be no poverty but only greater or lesser degrees of wealth—like the scientific sophism which asserts that there is no such thing as cold but only varying degrees of heat. Assuredly, cold exists. It is a reality even if it is not a physical reality, and it is the same with poverty.

It is only in relation to a form of life that wealth and poverty have a meaning. Human life, of course. Animals are never rich or poor but are either hungry or satiated, which is quite different. It is true that one often speaks of "infra-human" conditions of life, but what does that mean? Is there an absolute here? No. The level of life of the neolithic man, for instance, was almost superhuman in relation to the paleolithic level. We must set these concepts in motion, historicize them or, what comes to the same thing, we must humanize them.

Wealth does not consist in the existence or possession of certain products or "goods" called economic. In any case these products are merely the conditions of wealth, the factors that make it possible. Wealth is something that happens to a man, that changes and fashions his life. Although it is not that exactly, it is not far from being a state of mind. It is rather an opening out in the face of the possibilities of life (which must not exclude the possibility of being poor). I mean that a wealth which is automatic and inevitable would cease to be wealth in the perspective of human life. Note the close link that language makes between wealth and "fortune," their identification with the "goods of fortune."

What our age calls poverty has throughout history been a universal condition. It was primarily one of the basic forces of limitation, such as the brevity of human life, the darkness of night, the ailments and weaknesses of old age, and the obstacle of distance, which kept all men bound to the soil. On the foundation of this "poverty," which existed only in relation to the exceptions, there were the "privileged ones of fortune," those whom the gods, or chance, or force or deception, raised from the common condition of man to become the Rich. Strictly speaking, the only truly poor were those deprived of everything, those whom a hostile future had designated for another exceptional situation, for the depths of misfortune or a trial for the elect.

ONLY IN our day has the possibility begun to appear—still in the distance—of liberation from what seemed to be the condition of man, a liberation from poverty that will be an emancipation from a condition of servitude. But now we have perceived in man a real capacity to overcome poverty we are fearful. Why? I think it is because wealth often brings into plain sight the *void* in our life, our lack of imagination, in

Mr. Marias, author of *Reason and Life* (Yale) and a frequent contributor, writes for many periodicals in his native Spain.

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brief our true poverty. Material poverty was and is often still, if I am not mistaken, a tremendous alibi to excuse us from imagining, striving, undertaking, daring, loving. Men of our time are afraid people will say to them: "Now you are rich you no longer have any excuse. Do something."

Also important is the relationship between plans and resources. That is to say, the principal element in wealth must be imagination, the vital attempt, individual or collective. It is in terms of the latter that wealth or poverty can be measured in concrete human terms —not solely economic terms, which are abstractions. Below a "given" level (given by circumstances and objectives) poverty is a servitude and its elimination an essential process that will make man truly himself.

Economic prosperity well distributed and generally shared is not something to be afraid of—provided it does not deprive life of its feeling of insecurity. For life is an insecurity, and no degree of prosperity can overcome it. At most a certain arrangement could cause *economic* insecurity to disappear. But prosperity should not be identified simply with economic security; in fact, economic security can be a danger.

For example, what is called the Welfare State is a very special form of economic and social structure dependent upon a certain amount of prosperity but with an "inspiration" that is something quite different. I mean that the Welfare State does not have its origin as a necessary consequence of prosperity, nor does it have prosperity as its goal. Moreover "welfare" is not exactly "well-being"; it is much more social than personal.

Prosperity is not, then, the inspiration of the Welfare State, which can be found in Sparta rather than Athens or the wealthy Greek cities of Asia Minor and greater Greece. Spain is far from being a Welfare State but the tendency toward it is unmistakable there: preference for government employment, annuities, retirement and widows' pensions, etc. The pension and retirement system which cuts down considerably wages that are inadequate to begin with and the virtual impossibility of dismissing workers even though they keep their jobs at the cost of limiting their pay are so many signs of this attitude. As between wealth and security the spirit of the Welfare State will always choose the latter.

THAT IS what I see as a real danger in the Welfare State: a deceptive illusion of economic security that conceals the essential and functional insecurity of life. Ortega loved to quote the motto on the coat-of-arms of a fifteenth century Burgundian knight: "Nothing is more certain to me than the uncertainty of things." That is the motto of life itself. All that really matters, all that is important, is uncertain: the span of our own life and that of our dear ones, love, the loyalty of friends, the group to which we belong, health, intelligence, peace within our country, the intensity and the content of our hopes or of our illusions. Because of its quantitative and probably institutional character economic security tends to hide this aspect of our condition, the fact that we are vulnerable in our inmost being, that we embody insecurity, risk, failures always to be overcome, perennial aspiration that is never satisfied, adventure.

But, of course, that is no argument in favor of poverty. Quite the contrary. Poverty also bestows a singular security, but of a negative sort. Then life shrinks, becomes more and more limited, loses most of its possibilities. One is sure—of the worst. Only a certain amount of wealth permits the development of life; the risk this development entails involves insecurity.

A certain minimum of security is desirable nonetheless—first, because it provides the stability necessary for planning our life beyond the limits of the immediate future; then, to the extent that it removes the threat of absolute misery, total destitution, it makes the individual conscious of a state of charity in the broadest sense of the term, that is to say of the existence of "neighbors." This partial and relative security does not exclude poverty but only removes its obsessive character.

That is of the greatest importance, for the obsessive character of poverty hides in turn the other anxieties whose fabric envelops our life; it becomes a condition which dulls us toward the other feelings of insecurity —doubt, sorrow, risk and anguish—which are the lot of man. It is a kind of economic anesthesia which reduces man to a fraction of himself, which makes him easy to manipulate. An excess of economic security and total lack of it have the same consequences: to disguise the insecurity of life and its impoverishment.

Poverty or Wealth are never part of man's nature, of that human nature which is so often cited as a justification for unwillingness to understand. They do not constitute man's "condition" but only human situations—individual, collective, or historical.

We happen to be rich or to be poor, we become one thing or the other, we can try to establish ourselves in our present situation or to pass on to another. It is characteristic of a situation that one can never remain there and characteristic of man that he must imagine and conceive what his life will be no matter what the situation—that he is not bound to anything already determined but by turns adapts himself and makes his way through the world and through history, bearing in his heart the image of a promised land he is striving to reach.

Man has no excuse for ceasing to be a man, for falling below his true self except perhaps in quite abnormal and passing situations in which the exercise of his humanity is, so to speak, "suspended." Every situation is modifiable; every situation is, at least to

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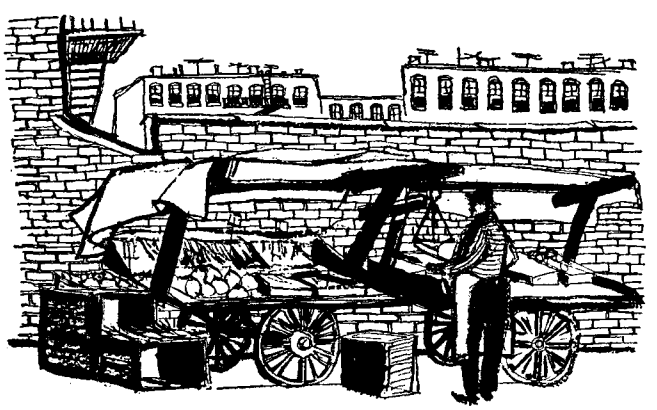
some extent, acceptable: to know it is a point of departure for another situation more to our liking.

ACCEPTANCE of reality is in my opinion one of the capital conditions for an authentic human life. It has nothing to do with conformism. To accept reality means to recognize it, to acknowledge its titles to legitimacy, to react to it without ever trying to disqualify it, deny it or annul it through sheer desire or imagination. From the acceptance of reality as a functional attitude can arise effects as different as resignation and the decision to resort to techniques which scrupulously respect the smallest nuances of a certain reality in order to change it, even to destroy it. Of negation and unwillingness to admit reality are born both the revolutionary spirit and the traditionalism which agree to disregard history; both attitudes have much in common with the ostrich.

Economic poverty is not equivalent to vital poverty. It involves limitations that must not be ignored but it also provides for choices: a certain simplicity, an authentic and harmonious course, fewer temptations and cares, a greater proximity to the deep sources of life, the possibility of "traveling light."

Last year I visited India where I beheld extreme poverty which often took the form of misery. The latter is a fall, a calamity mixed with infirmity or vice, almost invariably a consequence of the large city, which presents exigencies that are impossible to satisfy. But when poverty remained simply poverty, it inspired in me a deep respect mingled with admiration, and it seemed to be not far from a state of well-being or, if you prefer, happiness.

Poverty accepted as a condition of life—as it is in India as things now stand, although it can be overcome eventually—does not foster despair, bitterness, unhappiness. It constitutes the circumstance under which one must conduct his existence and try to be happy. That does not mean to conform to the situation indefinitely but to accept it as a starting point and especially to avoid superimposing upon the present situation the image of another possibility without any certainty that it is possible. Above all it means not setting one's heart upon an alternative without including the steps objectively necessary to reach that new state which forms the substance of one's dreams.



Good use of poverty consists in combining resignation with techniques. Bad use is to view the situation as fixed due to nature or fate, or to make man unhappy by causing him to abjure his present situation by means of the promise of a utopian situation torn from its essential connections with the present.

AS TO WEALTH, good use seems to make it a means of opening up possibilities that are ever new, a liberation, not a new servitude. It is a good thing to have fine houses and comfortable hotels provided they do not keep us from visiting places where they do not exist, from having contacts with men who have no access to such facilities, or from facing discomfort and adventure. It is good to travel by car and plane if it does not result in not wanting, or being able, to walk or to enjoy riding in a little puffing and crowded train. It is good to have every comfort and the nourishment which builds up the race and assures good health, good to have the striking clothes we find so amusing, good to have a level of existence which widens our life and makes it broader and more encompassing if we realize that all this is not inevitable, that we must deserve and earn it, that it can be lost. Also and more important still, if we are ready to renounce wealth if things go wrong, or if there are sufficient reasons to do so: to share it with our brothers or to resist injustice, to defend our liberty or, finally, to attempt some new possibility, some sacrifice.

Sometimes people speak about the benefits of wealth, all the while preserving the spirit of poverty. I like that expression and would not be far from subscribing to it myself were it not that I am afraid that one or two confusions lie there. I fear first of all that such people will not be taken seriously, that when they speak of the "spirit" of poverty it is only verbal, that is to say an insincere gesture by which they conceal their enjoyment of riches and the things wealth makes possible, by pretending that they have no interest in it.

The second danger, which is more respectable and more serious, is to identify the spirit of poverty with detachment. But I am little inclined to detachment and the morality which favors it often strikes me as suspect. The system of fleeing things, persons and ourselves, our mortal condition strikes me as a sort of defense, an attenuation of life, born out of cowardice, out of a fear of being vulnerable to the losses this life brings, even the loss of life itself. Instead of a morality of detachment I would advocate a morality of attachment to everything that is worthwhile. The only acceptable detachment is one which leads us to renounce something because of a stronger attachment to something higher which exercises a more powerful attraction.

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The maritime strike dramatized
the basic sickness of our shipping industry

Heavy Weather Ahead

by TOM BROOKS

TYPICALLY, the eighty-day "cooling-off period" injunction power of the Taft-Hartley Act has been applied to collective bargaining situations that call for other, wiser exercises of government power. The recent eighteen-day maritime strike was no exception. The "cooling off" theory assumes that there is some give-and-take left in the bargaining position of both parties around the normal range of issues—wages, working conditions and the like—and that the disputants are just too heated up, too pigheaded to see the compromises that must be made if working relationships are to be resumed. It's a good theory but without relevance to the conflict taking place in the maritime industry.

Most strikes these days take place over working conditions, the threat of job losses, all the issues gathered around the word "automation." The same kinds of issues were present in the maritime walkout that tied up nearly all of American shipping at a daily cost estimated at close to a million dollars. But storm-tossed seas are rarely clear, and so the familiar shoreside collective bargaining issues were clouded over by the rivalry of union groups and a complicated struggle between two powerful segments of the industry. At loggerheads are the Seafarers International Union, headed by ex-oiler Paul Hall, and the National Maritime Union, headed by ex-bosun Joseph P. Curran. Behind the N.M.U. loom the "giants" of American shipping, the government-subsidized dry-cargo and passenger ship operators in the American Merchant Marine Institute; behind the S.I.U. are the tramp operators, the unsubsidized dry-cargo and passenger vessel owners.

Curran and Hall have been scrapping along the waterfront longer than one cares to remember, so neither can be said to be a pawn of the shipowners with whom they bargain. But when jobs are at stake both maritime union leaders have found that their interests are closer to the respective segments of the industry with which they bargain than either of them would like to think.

There was a moment a year or so ago when it seemed that Curran and Hall were about to set aside belaying pins and begin hauling the same rope together. Paradoxically, what brought them together also drove them apart within a matter of months. American ship operators were deserting the American flag for the more convenient ones of Panama, Liberia, Honduras and Costa Rica. Over the last ten years, some 11,000 seamen's jobs have disappeared. The number of American ships plying the ocean tradeways has shrunk to 905 active vessels (in the depression year of 1939, there were 1,218 privately-owned vessels). The Panlibhonco fleet in sharp contrast today stands at 1,600.

Some more figures underscore the plight of American shipping. In 1939, 123 ships, operated by twelve companies, were in Atlantic and Gulf coastwise trade. Today there are just ten vessels left, operated by two companies. The U.S. merchant fleet carries only three per cent of our essential bulk cargo, including oil, aluminum and iron ore. The percentage of U. S. ships participating in American foreign trade was thirty per cent in 1936 and was down to 9.7 per cent in 1959.

CLEARLY, the industry is sick. According to maritime experts, it has been so since the decline of the clipper ships. The government has tried to overcome the general decline within the industry through a subsidy program and legal requirements such as that foreign aid grain must be shipped in "American bottoms" and that coastwise shipping must be aboard American flag vessels. On the other hand, by accepting the doctrine of "effective control"—the myth that American-owned ships flying the flags of Panama, Liberia, Honduras and Costa Rica are technically available to the government in the event of a national emergency—the government has encouraged the flight of American owned vessels to the so-called "flags of convenience." (The ship owners prefer the term "flags of necessity," which de-emphasizes the tax advantages and the lower wage costs they enjoy under Panlibhonco flags.)

Solon B. Turman, president of Lykes Brothers Steamship Company, one of the large subsidized operators, claims that the American fleet "is on the verge of being priced out of existence." The average

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daily cost of wages, he points out, on an American C-2 cargo vessel runs around $1,234, while this cost aboard British and German vessels is $353 and $300 respectively. At that, British and German wages are higher than those paid aboard Panlibhonco dry-cargo vessels. This fact plus tax advantages is what makes the doctrine of effective control so attractive to American ship owners.

The doctrine of effective control enables ship operators to escape the onus of paying American seamen's high wages. But how effective the control is remains a very real question which is dodged by the State Department and the Navy. One recalls Nazi submarines fueled on the high seas by American-owned, presumably "effectively controlled" vessels operating under the Liberian flag during the early stages of World War II. The latest attempt at "effective control" also collapsed when the U. S. tried to limit oil imports into Cuba. In one instance, the owner of a tanker merely pulled down his Liberian flag, hoisted a Greek flag and proceeded to carry his cargo of oil into Cuba.

The number of U.S.-owned flag-of-convenience ships is unknown—the estimates range from 450 to 700. But it is agreed that most are tankers and ore carriers. It is also reliably estimated that over half of these have been built within the last five years.

Of the 905 U. S. flag ships now in service, some 300 are subsidized; the balance are unsubsidized "aging" vessels of World War II design. Of the 28,000 jobs on board American flag ships, some 13,000 are aboard subsidized vessels. Jobs have declined in recent years but the drop was forty per cent lower than the general trend aboard subsidized vessels.

Faced with this kind of squeeze aboard American flag ships, the unions began to eye the estimated 25,000 jobs on flag-of-convenience vessels (union estimates). The chieftains of the National Maritime Union and the Seafarers International decided that the cooperation of their unions was essential to the task of organizing the runaways. It was their belief that unionization would act to equalize the competitive pressures between American flag ships and the Panlibhonco ships as well as open up more jobs for American seamen. The industry contends that union organization of the Panlibhonco fleet will force operators to flee to the flags of Britain, Norway and Greece. But as the N.M.U., the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association and the Masters, Mates and Pilots began to draw up their demands for this year's negotiations, it became clear that the N.M.U.-S.I.U. alliance was founded on shifting sands.

The competition for jobs between the American flag ships and the foreign flag ships is intense but not more so than between the subsidized and unsubsidized sections of the maritime industry. The nutmeat over which Curran and Hall fell out is contained in the present U. S. subsidy pattern. The liner trade (organized largely by the N.M.U.), carrying mostly package cargo, gets 100 per cent of U. S. subsidy funds. The tramps (largely organized by the S.I.U.), which carry bulk cargoes as well as some package cargo, get no subsidy assistance whatever.

THIS BASIC FACT of economic life on the waters of the world shaped the nature of the dispute that tied up American shipping for eighteen days and may, once again, tie it up at the end of September. The N.M.U. could get enough of its economic demands from the American Merchant Marine Institute companies to warrant a settlement, without a strike. The bill ultimately would be footed by the American taxpayer. Operating subsidies permit the government to pay up to forty per cent of wages and subsistence, supplies, insurance and repair costs of the operator. The companies balked at union demands that organizers be given access to American-owned foreign flag ships for purposes of organizing and that if a majority should vote for a union, recognition would be forthcoming. But Curran gave ground on this demand, acceding to a Labor Department suggestion that it set up a committee to look into the question of American seafaring union jurisdiction over such vessels. As a result, Curran's N.M.U. has settled most of its contracts, winning substantial gains in wages and working conditions.

Hall's problem—and approach—was substantially different. The S.I.U., really, was not directly involved; its contracts did not expire June 15 though it did claim an open-end agreement that enabled it to negotiate whenever the Engineers' and Masters', Mates', and Pilots' contracts expired. Since the unsubsidized companies with which the Seafarers International negotiates are pretty much up against it, Hall declared that his union and the others associated with it would not press for wage increases but would insist on entree to foreign-flag U. S.-owned ships and on a joint labor-management committee that would fight for a reviewing of the subsidy program. This, of course, Curran could not buy. He immeditely accused Hall of "strik-

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ing on political issues" and of sacrificing the economic interests of American seamen to the interests of marginal shipowners.

To accomplish his goal, Hall has as a wedge the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association, which represents engineers on both subsidized and unsubsidized ships. The ploy was simple: go for a quick settlement with the tramp operators and keep the big "fat cats" hanging until they came across. (Hall also had the Masters, Mates and Pilots in his corner at the outset but lost them to the Curran group sometime during the strike.)

When the recent Taft-Hartley injunction halted the walkout, the Seafarers and the Engineers had settled with a number of small lines, winning among other things the right to board foreign-flag vessels of the companies involved for the purpose of organization. The N.M.U. pooh-poohs this as a pyrrhic victory. It says that only a handful of ships is involved. (The S.I.U. claims that there are a minimum of fifty ships and a maximum of two hundred that will be opened to its organizers.) Curran argues that the hearings before the Department of Labor committee will open up the whole question of "effective control." The Seafarers International remains skeptical, pointing out that, no matter what the Administration in Washington, the State Department and the Navy have never wavered in their support of the policy that enables and encourages American shipping to operate under the Panlibhonco flags.

In any adequate coverage of maritime pulling and hauling, two other factors must be mentioned: the looming threat of James Riddle Hoffa's dream of a transport union empire and the gray shadow-government of oil. Paul Hall of the Seafarers stands as the one block to Hoffa's ambitions reaching onto the waterfront. Hoffa and N.M.U.'s Curran recently signed a mutual aid pact. "Even a mouse can help a lion," Curran informed the delegates to the recent Teamsters' convention. It also might be said that the mouse might need the help of the lion in coping with the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association, which stands athwart of the National Maritime Union's agreements with members of the American Merchant Marine Institute. Curran's N.M.U. has a rival organization which it would like to see replace the M.E.R.A., at least aboard N.M.U. contract ships. How Hoffa can help, however, remains problematical—especially since the New York Teamsters and the International Longshoremen's Association are pretty much in the Hall corner.

The shadow government of oil, when all is said and done, pretty much determines U. S. policy on the doctrine of "effective control" and to a lesser extent on subsidized shipping. Esso is a member of the American Merchant Marine Institute, which although made up of American shipping interests, strangely enough happens to support the theory of effective control even though to an outsider it might appear to be against their interests to do so. In turn it also happens that Esso, and the other oil companies, support the subsidy program which keeps A.M.M.I. members afloat. The arrangement is, to say the least, an interesting *quid pro quo*.

THE SUBSIDIZED package-cargo operators have no interest in escaping the American flag. The unsubsidized ore and oil carriers clearly do. But one might be pardoned for asking: is it to our national interest that they do so?

The Merchant Marine Act of 1936 was adopted in the fond hope that the U. S. merchant marine might be expanded to the point where it would carry fifty per cent of our foreign commerce. That year the merchant marine did in fact carry thirty per cent. If we had maintained the ratio that was in effect twenty-five years ago, today we would have some 2,700 ships plying the high seas.

But we don't. I suspect that Joe Curran and Paul Hall would be feuding even if we did. But as it is, their struggle is also an industry struggle. Hall has accused Curran of "selling out" any serious attempt to organize "flag of convenience" ships in return for a substantial wage and benefit package. Curran accuses Hall of wanting to destroy the U. S. government's subsidy program.

There's no question but that Hall wants the subsidy program overhauled. And so do tramp operators who want a piece of it. Curran says the present program "blocks the chiselers and the fly-by-night operators who are just looking for a fast crack at the public till." And he doesn't want the program jeopardized.

The question that the Taft-Hartley injunction did not solve—and won't—is: will Paul Hall be able to crack the present subsidy set-up? The answer turns on the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association, which is still on strike against N.M.U-contract, subsidized operators. Tempting the M.E.B.A., as it did the Masters, Mates and Pilots, is an attractive economic offer from the American Merchant Marine Institute group. But if the Engineers stand firm with Hall, there is no telling how long a tie-up might last, starting at the end of the eighty-day cooling-off period.

The Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association is a small union of 11,000. Not so long ago, it was warned by a spokesman of the maritime industry that if it persisted in its course, "we'll bust your union." Lee Pressman, general counsel of the union, came back swiftly: "If that's the name of the game, that's the game we'll play." It was not lightly said, and on the outcome of the game rests the future of the American maritime industry.

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The networks have become the primary villains on the television scene

Irrigating the TV Wasteland

by NAT HENTOFF

FOR EIGHT DAYS in June, an arm of the Federal Communications Commission held hearings at the Federal court house in New York on the creative aspects of T.V. programming—or more accurately, on the lack of them. For those in attendance as well as listeners to the city-owned W.N.Y.C. (which broadcast the full proceedings in a notable example of public service programming), a beguiling array of producers, writers, directors, and stars underlined the obvious aridity of television. (There were a few dissenters, among them such creative intellectuals as Ed Sullivan and Perry Como, who objected that if you were presumptuous enough to criticize all this free entertainment, you were, after all, able to shut the machine off.)

Newspaper coverage of the hearings was skimpy, and the reporters—including the man from the *Times*—generally missed the few salient facts at each day's tribunal. Except for a few token fragments, the television news programs acted as if the hearings were a mirage, as they may well turn out to have been in so far as likely results of the testimony are concerned. The eight-day blow was useful, however, in summarizing a portion of the reasons for the transformation of television into the mechanized wasteland of which Newton Minow has spoken so feelingly. The final picture, however, was blurred, and it is the intention of this faintly optimistic prognosis to indicate the main current causes for the dust storms and several prospects for irrigation projects.

First of all, threaded through the hearings was the fact that while the advertising agencies (and the sponsors who ingenuously depend on them) are still occasionally at the source of the mediocrity, the primary villains have become the networks. There were, to be sure, a few nearly unbelievable examples of the fear-twisted workings of the corporate mind. When Chrysler sponsored "The Andersonville Trial," no mention was allowed of the name of the then President. Unfortunately for Mr. Lincoln, he had become a competing car. And when "Member of the Wedding" was in rehearsal, it was suggested that a scene of white children eating with the Negro maid might be expunged. The agency was soothed by being informed that having the young eat with their "mammies" still is an honored custom of the South.

The key decisions as to program content and scheduling, however, are now made by the networks after several years of having abdicated their responsibility to the agency robots. But the networks are, by and large, even more ruthlessly ratings-locked than the advertisers.

When General Electric told C.B.S. it would like to include six C.B.S.-produced documentaries next season among its innocuous half-hour dramas, the network absolutely refused, afraid of being outrated by the formula fantasies on the other networks. There have been many cases, in fact, of a network turning down a venturesome series—drama as well as public affairs—even when a sponsor was eagerly available. At the same time, of course, the three network heads—Sarnoff, Goldenson and Paley—continue to speak fervently of the need to fully realize the limitless potentials of "this great medium."

CONCURRENT with their recapture of decision-making, the networks have increasingly indulged in a vicious pressure system by which they have bought themselves into part ownership of a program in return for placing it on a season's schedule. On paper, this new form of muscling-in (as it used to be called in the younger years of free enterprise) is in return for network advice and sometimes for network investment. But the hard fact is that if you have a new series, your chances of getting it on the air will be increased markedly if you invite the network to share your profits.

The networks have also been active agents in the current preoccupation with gratuitous violence. Also in June, a producer for Ziv United Artists told a Senate subcommittee in Washington that officials of both N.B.C. and C.B.S. had instructed him to raise the heat under his string of potboilers. No such instruction is needed—although it has been given—from A.B.C. since that network has become notorious for the incidence of killings and mutilations on those programs it presents in the public interest.

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Current remedies to diminish network control are not apt to be effective. The fact that the F.C.C. may well limit network ownership of stations from five to three is hardly going to make much difference; and the reconsideration of option time, while more likely to produce some results, will not alter the current situation organically. Operating under "option time," a network affiliate must agree to schedule network programs for a stipulated number of hours a day (currently a maximum of ten). Under option time, as F.C.C. chairman Minow pointed out recently, ". . . many network affiliates don't know what's going to be on their television screen until it's there. They see the program the same time that the audience does. So it's hard to hold them responsible under the present system and therefore we feel that some measure of network regulation is essential."

Even without option time, however, there is no evidence that the product of the independent packages—Screen Gems, Ziv United Artists, etc.—will be any improvement over the network-controlled programs. Nor is there any evidence that a local affiliate, no longer forced to program so much of what the network sends, will happily apply its new freedom to creating local programs of merit.

It should also be noted at this point that Mr. Minow —an F.C.C. appointee who finally is in the rare tradition of Clifford Durr, Frieda Hennock, and James Fly—is not going to be allowed by Congress to go too far in his attempts to regulate the networks and individual stations, as has already been demonstrated by the defeat of the bill to make the F.C.C. more efficient and give its chairman more power. In 1959, a *Broadcasting Magazine* survey revealed that eleven Senators and twenty-two Representatives were financially involved in radio and television stations, either directly or through relatives. Since T.V. profits for individual stations hit a new high this year, it is, alas, unrealistic to expect most of these shareholders in "The Untouchables" or its equivalents to do anything more than obstruct remedial legislation that might draw a little blood. During the F.C.C. hearings in New York, incidentally, H. William Fitelson, general counsel and T.V.-radio director for the Theatre Guild, suggested mandatory public listing of everyone who owns stock in T.V. stations—a salutary idea, but one which may not be implemented for a long, long, soul-searching time.

IT HAS BEEN suggested by several sources that the "magazine concept" of advertising might help irrigate the wasteland measurably. Under this form of paying for programs—a form currently in use on British commercial networks—the advertiser simply buys spot announcements. In England, the commercials are generally limited to six minutes an hour. The sponsor has no control over where these commercials appear; he cannot buy an entire program or a part thereof. The result, of course, is that the advertiser then has no say in program content.

As a matter of fact, a tendency toward the "magazine concept" has already begun in American television, and without any governmental ukase. In 1958, according to a survey this past January by *Sponsor* magazine, single sponsorship of a show represented thirty-two of sixty-five network hours. In 1960, only twenty hours had been bought by a single sponsor. There was meanwhile a slight increase in alternate sponsorship (one week Goodyear, let's say, and the next, Philco presents the same program). The major increase was in "other sponsorship," which means participation of several buyers in a program, often limited to a single minute. Participation buying was only fourteen and one-half hours out of sixty-five in 1958, but was up to thirty-three out of seventy-two hours in 1960. As *Variety* explains the shift, costs of programs have risen precipitously, and it is not only much less expensive to just buy a spot in a program, but the brief message will have as much impact as would a longer sell when the sponsor alternates in paying for the whole package with several other firms.

It is, then, somewhat naive to expect elysium when the "magazine concept" is fully in force. The one healthy change when that day comes will be the liberation of the producer from all sponsor control. But he will still have to cope with the vice-presidents in charge of programming at the networks.

The hearings touched only briefly on another powerful obstacle to quality programming in the pervasive presence of M.C.A., which is both the largest talent agency in show business and also the most important packager of filmed television series, a conflict of interest that has long intrigued the Justice Department with as yet no visible results. It is to the credit of the much beleaguered David Susskind that he was the only witness to speak candidly and in detail of the machinations of M.C.A.

Other problems will remain even under "magazine" television. Despite the requests of such producers as Fred Coe and Robert Herridge, no network—nor M.C.A. which, in effect, is a fourth network—has devoted time and money to building up a workshop in which new writers, directors, actors, and producers could be developed for television. C.B.S. tried for a while last year with its *C.B.S. Television Workshop,* but lacked the patience to sustain the operation. Obviously, the need for fresh talent is particularly vital in a medium which consumes so much time, but the networks are, after all, essentially selling a product—the sponsor's—not higher standards of entertainment.

There is also the increasing use of tape and film to the extent that some eighty per cent of the

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programs in the 1961-62 season will be on film. Most of this film comes out of Hollywood and is produced as if it were motion pictures. Scenes are shot out of sequence, heavily edited, and often the film cutter has more to say about the final product than the director. The result, of course, is no experimentation in developing an indigenous television dramatic form. Instead, most filmed and taped series are simply small-scale motion pictures. (It is, incidentally, possible to tape a program without cutting as if it were "live," but this hardly happens anywhere but in the East these days, and seldom there.)

Not only are these filmed dramatic programs inferior movies, but they are now even using old scripts that were never good enough for pictures. Murray Schumach reported in the N.Y. *Times* recently that M.G.M. is building an anthology series on unused literature bought by the studio years ago. "The Metro approach," noted Mr. Schumach, "is that what is not good enough for movies may be suitable for television."

Television simultaneously agrees with Hollywood's low opinion of the medium. N.B.C.-T.V. has bought for $20,000,000 a group of feature films made by 20th Century-Fox since 1950. As of present plans, these pictures will be scheduled on the network in prime Saturday evening time in an attempt to cut down the high-riding "Gunsmoke" and "Have Gun, Will Travel" on C.B.S.

THE PROGNOSIS, then, for voluntary, significant change by the three networks is dim indeed. It is true that C.B.S. is planning a major weekly one-hour "live" drama series for the 1962-63 season and that even A.B.C. is talking in terms of more substantial dramatic programs; but the networks will continue to be basically governed by the uncertain winds of ratings and by their own attempts at divining auguries.

Pay-T.V. is so far an unknown quantity, but most of the three or four idealists left inside television have little faith in it. As one agent for several of the more inventive producers and directors put it, "there'll just be another group of exploiters to add to those who expropriated 'free' T.V.; and in time, it'll all be the same group."

Pragmatically, a more sanguine future for television probably involves two parallel movements. One is syndication of superior programs among individual stations. N.T.A.'s "Play of the Week" was finally sold to sixty-five stations before its demise, and David Susskind's "Open End" two-hour format on W.N.E.W.-T.V. in New York next season will probably be widely syndicated. There is also a new company, Television Affiliates Corporation, which has been formed to help stations exchange locally produced programs. Only one station in a given area can subscribe to the project, and a small station need only spend about $2,000 a year for membership that will enable it to get programs it couldn't afford to produce itself. In thesis, the Corporation intends to exchange only first-rate programs. We shall see.

The other direction is educational television. There have been proposals for a national educational network, one of them by Senator Warren Magnuson, chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee. Dr. Allen Du Mont, whose early experimental work was important in the development of television, has watched the medium grow into adolescence with a certain amount of horror, and has proposed a government-sponsored, non-commercial fourth network. It's a laudable idea, but is not likely to be adopted in the present climate of concern to maintain "free" if irresponsible enterprise.

There is now, however, a growing educational network with the National Educational Television and Radio Center in New York acting as its hub. The center provides any of the country's fifty-three educational outlets which wants it a weekly package of about ten hours of programming which encompasses science, fine arts, and the social sciences. Several of these programs are excellent, and the overall quality and substance of the package should improve once New York City finally starts its educational station—barring the success of Governer Robert Meyner's obstructionist efforts to keep the proposed educational channel for his state of New Jersey. The considerable resources on which a New York educational project can draw could provide new standards for educational syndication.

Gilbert Seldes is opposed to segregation in television—having one "cultural" network instead of balanced programming on all the networks. Mr. Seldes is correct in principle, but so long as the networks function essentially as product movers, the only recourse for the near future is syndication of individualized programs by an educational network and by commercial firms involved in such specialized projects as "Open End" and "Play of the Week." The networks will continue to produce generally useful documentaries and news programs, particularly since more sponsors are now interested in this area of programming, but television is capable of a great deal more than news reporting and analysis as those who have seen "The Robert Herridge Theatre" and the B.B.C.'s syndicated "An Age of Kings" have discovered.

What is going to happen in television, in short, will duplicate to some extent the current state of radio. There will be a string of stations, educational and non-affiliated independents, who will provide what can be termed an F.M. approach to television, As always, the minority audience will have to make its own accomodations and cultivate its own plot of land.

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THE SCREEN

LOVE AND JOY

OF ALL THE SAINTS in Catholic hagiology, it is no doubt the man from Assisi who has the most universal appeal for Catholics, Protestants and non-believers alike. Some of this probably stems from sentimentality; but many admirers of St. Francis genuinely appreciate his goodness, his great faith and his insistence on joy, poverty, hope and boundless love for fellow men, animals and other aspects of nature. It is because of this universal interest that I am sorry that the new American film about him is not better. "Francis of Assisi" is by no means a bad movie; Plato A. Skouras has given it an extraordinarily handsome production, helped by a good cast and Piero Portalupi's stunning color photography of various Italian interiors and exteriors, especially of Assisi and Rome where the film was made. But because the film has so much in its favor, I wanted it to be better.

Looking remarkably like the early portraits of St. Francis, Bradford Dillman is quite impressive in the title role even though his characterization does not have great depth. Simple, complex, rigid, unorthodox Francis, who gave up his playboy youth and pursuit of knighthood to follow the ideal life described in the Gospels, was probably no easy person to live with and is perhaps too difficult an assignment for a young actor. Nevertheless, Dillman, with his ascetic face, looks good in the role and manages to be at his best in the big scenes that are in themselves charged with emotion: his applying to the Pope (Finlay Currie) for approval of his "primitive" rule, his encounter with the Sultan (Pedro Armendariz) after being captured by the Saracens, his receiving the Stigmata. The excellent supporting cast includes Eduard Franz as Francis's mercenary, unsympathetic father, Cecil Kellaway as Cardinal Ugolino who was so friendly to Francis and his Order, Russell Napier as Brother Elias who led the revolt against Francis's strict rule of having no possessions, and others as brothers in the Order and various citizens of Assisi and religious who came in contact with the holy man. That Dolores Hart, as Clare, and Stuart Whitman, as Francis's friend in love with Clare and resentful of Francis's influence, are much too superficial in their roles is more the fault of the script and direction than the actors themselves.

Eugene Vale, James Forsyth and Jack Thomas wrote their script from the Louis de Wohl novel, and while it includes most of the factual stories about Francis, it also has embellishments that tend to be talky and uninspired. The first part of the film, showing Francis as a warrior and a young-man-about-Assisi with the semi-fictional Stuart Whitman character and with Clare, is slow-moving and dull. Director Michael Curtiz allows pageantry to take over here, and although some of this is quite handsome on the wide CinemaScope screen, it is not particularly dramatic and has almost nothing to say. Director Curtiz lets his characters plod along, and the early part of the picture is so static that there seems to be no conflict between Francis and his friends and his father and even within himself. The interest in the last half of the film picks up considerably. What this "Francis of Assisi" fails to convey, however, is the joyousness that Francis preached and lived.

Rossellini made a little movie in 1950 called "The Flowers of St. Francis," and although this was a minor picture in the history of Italian neo-realism, and was inexpensively made in black and white, it had a charming spontaneity as it related some of the incidents in the life of Francis and the Brothers. The scenes of self-abnegation, Brother Juniper giving away his clothes, Francis kissing the leper, a visit with Clare—all well done with amazing simplicity and realism. And the whole little film sparkled with joy —a wacky sort of jumping-in-the-air kind of joy— and you came away from it anxious to do a little jumping with joy yourself. The new "Francis of Assisi" won't have you jumping. You'll come away with great respect and admiration for the saint, and you'll realize you've seen some beautiful scenes of Italy and lovely tableaux centering on Francis. But you'll also realize that the best and most beautiful part of the film are the first-rate shots of the Giotto frescoes showing the life of St. Francis which are used as an introduction to the movie itself and are flashed on the screen as backgrounds for the opening titles. Nothing that follows, for all its reverence and good taste, quite comes up to the exquisite Giottos. In the film you get a better view of the frescoes than you do in Assisi, though, and they alone are worth the price of admission.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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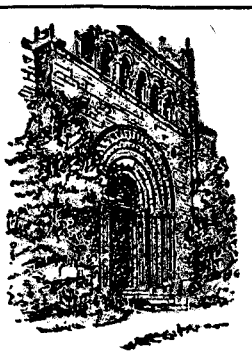

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COMMUNICATIONS

CATHOLICS AND CASTRO

Toronto, Canada.

TO THE EDITORS: Though The Commonweal's position on the Cuban question has been much more reasonable and just than that of any other American Catholic periodical of which I have knowledge, very especially since the abortive invasion of last April, I must say that I have been quite disappointed in The Commonweal's inability more critically to judge the prevalent American interpretation of the Cuban revolution.

I am rather distressed that American Catholics appear to have judged in this matter, first as Americans, second as anti-Communists, and only rarely as Christians—by which I mean that their concern with American interests and with the danger from Russia and Communism has often taken precedence over their concern for international justice. They have found it, I believe, an extremely happy conjunction that Communism, the enemy of the U.S., is also the enemy of the Church. They give the impression of having come to think that this amounts to a divine sanction of hatred for Russia and, by extension, of Cuba. Apart from the fact that not every antagonist of the U.S. must be Communist, American Catholics might well wonder whether even atheists are an exception to be made both to Christ's new commandment and to the natural law of justice.

I am also distressed that Canadian Catholics, too, have placed themselves in the van of the opposition to Cuba's struggle for independence and maturity, for no firmer reason than the Cuban revolution is anti-American and the Americans are anti-Communist. And I am very distressed to see that American and Canadian Catholics have insensibly become so conquered by the very McCarthyism which many of them upon reflection reject, that the baseless charges of Communism and oppression made by obviously vested interests are gullibly accepted not only in the absence of reasonable evidence (among which I do not count the *unsupported* word of either the United States State Department or the American press), but also in the presence of very many indications to the contrary.

I am especially distressed that the very Catholic periodical that once saw through the proto-McCarthyism that was the opinion that the Spanism civil war was a "holy war," has come to share, even if only in small part, a parallel evaluation of a partly similar case. I submit that in this question The Commonweal has failed to give its best possible leadership to American and Canadian Catholic opinion.

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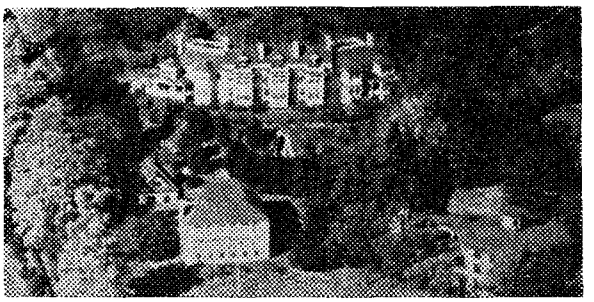

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The Impact of American Life on Religion

RELIGION IN AMERICAN LIFE. Ed. by James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jamison. Princeton. Four Volumes. $32.50.

By DANIEL J. CALLAHAN

PRESUMABLY, the guiding assumption of editors of collected essays is that if enough people have a go at a question some kind of light will dawn on the reader by the time he is through. Sometimes this does happen; usually not. Though no such light dawned on me after working my way through these long books, the fault lies not with the editors but with the subject matter itself. The culprit is American religion. It has long been and is becoming even more enigmatic and full of hopes, promises, failures, paradoxes, losses and gains.

Messrs. Smith and Jamison must have realized they had a seemingly hopeless task on their hands when they started. Yet working with an American religion whose mere numerical variety must leave the Heinz Soup Company writhing with envy, they have managed to encompass and delineate almost every facet of any importance. If no single, illuminating ray manages to break through the fog, enough brilliant patches of light do to have justified the scope and ambition of these volumes.

The secret of their success lies in the quality of the contributors. Taken together, they form something of a roll call of the most distinguished observers of the American religious scene. It would take a long paragraph simply to list them all but the names of H. Richard Niebuhr, Will Herberg, Perry Miller, Oscar Handlin, Daniel D. Williams and Carlos Baker will do for a start. To the editors, however, and to the Princeton University Press high praise is in order for their choice of contributors and for having the nerve to conceive the set of books in a grand, expansive manner.

Volume One, logically enough, is given over to *The Shaping of American Religion.* It begins with four essays which survey the institutional histories of American Protestantism, Catholicism and Judaism. It is altogether fitting that the first of these four, "The Protestant Movement and Democracy in the United States," should have been written by H. Richard Niebuhr. For it is his works which are most quoted by all the other authors—an unobtrusive tribute to the high place he holds in the eyes of his peers.

And Niebuhr's particular interest in the impact of democracy on American Protestantism foreshadows what is perhaps the single most prominent theme in the collection: the way in which American society, its mores and culture, have influenced and shaped the theology and life of the churches. This theme permeates the good essays by Handlin on Judaism and Father Henry J. Browne on Catholicism and becomes even more explicit in Stow Person's treatment of the response of religion to our American penchant for modernity and progress. Competent short histories of American Protestant theology, the place of religion as an animating force in the American Revolution and its aftermath (Perry Miller), and the relationship of religion and science in American philosophy effectively round out the first volume.

Volume Two, *Religious Perspectives in American Culture,* centers on the role religion plays in our social and political life and in the arts. Will Herberg's essay on "Religion and Education in America" is typically competent and balanced and William Lee Miller's "American Religion and American Political Attitudes" is an exceedingly penetrating interpretation of that much-battered question. In particular, Miller's description of American religion as a "moralized version of Americanism" is persuasively argued; and it sets one's hair on end. This viewpoint is nicely complemented by the essays of Wilber G. Katz, Dayton McKean, and Morton Darrow, each of whom discusses, with varying success, religion and American law and political activity.

While not so dramatic or timely as the socio-political essays, Willard Thorp's treatment of "The Religious Novel as Best Seller in America" and Carlos Baker's "The Place of the Bible in American Fiction," are considerably more original and explore some neglected areas of American literature. The remaining pieces by Richard P. Blackmur, Leonard Ellinwood and Donald Drew Egbert are useful, if superficial accounts, of religious poetry, music and architecture.

Volume Three has not been published but, according to the jackets, will be out in the Fall. The title is listed as *Religious Thought and Economic Society: The European Background,* by Jacob Viner.

The fourth volume, *A Critical Bibliography of Religion in America,* ed. by Nelson R. Burr, actually consists of two books; and a valuable pair of books they are. Bibliographies, even "critical" ones, will never attract anyone as light summer reading. But utility is their proper measure and, from a random sampling, there are enough good, bad and indifferent books listed here to keep the single-minded busy for a good hundred years. For those of more scattered interests, the bibliography is topically organized and reasonably well indexed.

Now as noted above, the theme of the impact of democracy and American life on religion in America is a constant one in the series of essays. That the impact has not been altogether healthy seems to be the judgment of many and it is plain enough why. Democracy itself has not necessarily caused the trouble. Instead, it is that democracy and "our way of life" have been so piously exalted and proclaimed that religion has been seduced into seeing its purpose as almost identical with it. While Protestantism has been the main

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victim of this trend in our history, Catholicism bears some scars as well: the super-patriotism of many Catholics, and the glorification of some of the less savory predilections of our culture at the expense of other cultures bears witness to this.

Catholicism and Protestantism alike have suffered from a compulsive need to justify themselves by arguing the pragmatic value of religion in sustaining the institutions and fads of our country. Often this has meant an unduly hasty conversion of secular slogans into religious dogmas. Recall that a few years ago many religious writers fell all over themselves trying to jump on the "peace of mind" bandwagon. Religion, prosperity, the good life and inner peace became one sticky, indigestible potion. We haven't quite regurgitated it all, but the stomach pumps have been at work; whether they are stronger than the panic induced by Berlin crises, H-bombs, the lack of national purpose and free-floating anxiety remains to be seen.

Democracy and American life, despite the temptations they place in the way of religion, have also had some very good effects. Most notably, the fact that religion is free in this country has enabled the churches to experiment, to change, and to locate more easily their specific genius and possibilities. The demand for self-initiative that freedom bears with it has been a source of great strength, forcing the churches to develop an inner vitality which could provide the kind of tough inner fibre which the state had once been depended upon to provide. The very development of secularism and pluralism in this country has prodded the churches into re-thinking their task in the world and has led to many innovations which would have been unthinkable in an earlier period when religion held undisputed sway.

What seems to emerge from the somewhat cloudy state of contemporary American religion is an uncertain future indeed. The essays in the first two volumes give some hints and clues but nothing like clear pointers. The signs are good and bad. The best sign is a decided turning again on the part of Protestantism to dogmatic theology and away from the identification of religion with social work and morality, though these latter remain central forces in liberal Protestantism. Catholicism too is shifting its direction: on the one hand toward a grasp of the importance of social and political morality as distinct from personal morality; on the other toward a more comprehensive theology which stresses the corporate side of man's life and his place in the concrete, material world. The influence of Catholicism and Protestantism on each other, though usually mediated by a common secular society, has probably been important in bringing about these developments.

The bad signs, it should be apparent to all, are clearly seen in the fact that the counsels of religious men count for less and less in determining the intellectual and social currents of our times. The real danger, if it is not already a *fait accompli,* is that religion will seem less and less a viable alternative to uncommitted men in a world of plural values. The almost frenetic attempts to argue that only religion provides the spiritual muscle necessary to combat Communism is as much an index of the uneasiness and self-doubt of religion as it is an argument about how best to meet the Communist thrust. Something analogous could surely be said about the call to make religion "relevant" to our contemporary needs. Time alone will show how successful these calls will be.

Distinctly European Voices

THE DIGNITY OF NIGHT. By Klaus Roehler. Lippincott. $1.65.
THE GAMES OF NIGHT. By Stig Dagerman. Lippincott. $1.65.

By BRUCE A. COOK

IN THIS CENTURY, the short story form has become all but the private property of the English-speaking peoples. First the English, then the Irish and the Americans have taken up the short story and added a bit to its development. It has come to the point that not long ago Somerset Maugham was moved to write: ". . . some persons, unacquainted with the history of literature, have claimed that the short story was an American invention. That, of course, is not so; but still, it may very well be admitted that in none of the countries of Europe has this form of fiction been so assiduously cultivated as it has been in the United States; nor have its methods, technique and possibilities been elsewhere so attentively studied."

In Europe, on the other hand, there are not so many short stories written or read. One reason for this is quite simple: there simply aren't many European magazines open to quality short stories. Oh, there are magazines aplenty on the Continent —any glance at a railroad kiosk will assure you of that—but among the copies of *Neue Illustrierte* and *Paris Match* you are not likely to find the kind of quality mass publication that accepts and encourages good short story writing. And since the intellectual community of any European country is numerically smaller than that of the United States, there are correspondingly fewer publications of literary, political and social appeal. Those journals which do exist—and there are some distinguished names among them—seldom print short fiction; their purposes are usually altogether too specialized and their tone too serious to allow something so vague and frivolous as fiction between their covers.

There is another reason, less obvious but more important, for the paucity of European short fiction. As a group, European writers seem to be little interested in the form. Among the Robbe-Grillet's and the Sarraute's the writing of fiction has become increasingly intellectualized. Writers are much more programmatic there, given to movements and manifestos. And that of

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course is the problem—the short story is a good deal more difficult to adapt to intellectual programs than the novel. It is a much more personal form. Often lyrical, sometimes no more than a verbal response to the stimulus of the writer's environment, the short story taps the author's personal resources of experience and emotion.

This, I think, can be shown with reference to these short story collections by two European writers, a German and a Swede. The authors, though unequally skilled, speak in voices that are distinctly individual, but voices whose tones echo the deeper pitches of their European culture.

The Dignity of Night is Klaus Roehler's first book. Born in 1929, he was called up at the age of sixteen for service in the German Army in 1945, just in time to witness the final holocaust of the German defeat. In this volume, the author's war experience is represented by only one story, "The Hero." In it, he tells of a farm boy in the final days of the war, who, spurred by Nazi slogans, fires upon enemy troops and precipitates the destruction of a band of surrendering soldiers. It is one of the shortest stories in the book, yet it is also the most personal and powerful.

Most of the stories in the book are cast in the form of satires of present-day German society. "Eighteenth Birthday," "New Year's Every Day" and the title story all present pictures of a weak, hollow society. The difficulty is that the terms Roehler uses are rather flat so that the whole effect is one of adulteration. There is one gory little parable, "My Pigeon," which is more in the style of John Collier than Franz Kafka. Rounding out the collection is "Bubul," a long and very funny account of a week in the life of a university student. Curiously, Bubul's manners and attitudes are reminiscent of Camus' stranger, but Bubul's misadventures move through the realm of the picaresque rather than the absurd.

What we have in this book of short stories is the work of a young writer, one still feeling out the possibilities of his craft and form. Klaus Roehler is still taking chances, trying to find his own way.

Stig Dagerman gives quite another impression. All the stories in *The Games of Night* bear the mark of a careful and able craftsman; and some bear another stamp as well, one whose name it embarrasses any reviewer to pronounce. Let me put it in parentheses: (art).

A biographical note from Michael Meyer's introduction to the book is in order here. Stig Dagerman committed suicide in 1954 at the age of thirty-one. By the age of twenty-six he had written four novels, four plays, a book of short stories, another of reportage and numerous articles and poems. From that time until his death five years later he wrote very little else. He planned and even began novels and a film, but Dagerman, once the finest and most prolific young writer in Sweden, completed nothing more. Had he written himself out? Of course not. These are not the stories of an exhausted talent, but of a writer at the height of his powers. The roots of his paralysis were sunk deep in schizophrenia.

His sickness can be seen in these stories—not chronicled, certainly, but only suggested in hints and clues. In the autobiographical piece which begins the book and in the stories, "The Games of Night," "Sleet," "Where's My Iceland Jersey," "The Surprise" and "In Grandmother's House," the author borrows upon bitter experience of a sad and tender childhood to bring us the finest stories in the book. For the most part, they are written in a quiet, gentle tone. Though it is dangerous to cross cultural boundaries in making comparisons like this, while reading these stories I was often reminded of Frank O'Connor—something in the feeling, something in the attitude.

I liked the stories I have named better than the others, but all are well worth reading and worth remembering. They are fine stories. Stig Dagerman was a fine writer. I would welcome translations of his novels and plays.

One last word: both these books were issued in Lippincott's paperback Keystone Short Stories series. The publisher has done well to issue original books by new writers in moderately-priced editions. We need more writers and more stories.

A Psalm of Praise

THE CIRCUS OF THE SUN. By Robert Lax. Journeyman Books. $1.50.

By THOMAS P. McDONNELL

THERE is a gentleman's agreement in much recent criticism which holds, in effect, that profundity can reside only in the depths of calculated obfuscation. It is the kind of game (thus presuming the nature of innocence) that erects the most elaborate structures in order to account for the inadequacies of man and the perfection of art. The Curricular Poet still holds the lectern—though rumblings may be heard from the coffee shop around the corner—while the poet of the creative innocence speaks in a voice too clear to be distinguished.

I call a "poet of the creative innocence" one whose work is involved not in the continual lamination of the rococo but in an authentic response to life. Robert Lax is that kind of poet; and because he is that kind of poet, one of the most beautiful of recent poems may be foolishly ignored. If so it will be ignored for much the same reason that St. John of the Cross and Blake, the contemporaries Eberhart and Antoninus, are not considered good curricular material for either the classroom or the quarterly.

The Circus of the Sun, then, profound in the way of creative innocence, is in itself a psalm in praise of creation. An exploration of the poem's imagery yields a richness of meaning. The imagery is drawn from many sources: genesis, morning, the beginning, time; the figure of the circle and the field; the circus itself ("Have you seen my circus? / Have you known such a thing?") the people and the animals (elephants that "move / about in the tall grass, / lifting their great scalloped feet."); and especially the performers, the Cristianis, the fabulous Mogador.

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It is Mogador, the equestrian acrobat, who becomes pretentious and self-conscious about his performance ("I am a flame, / A dark cloud, / A bird;") and falls off the horse. Not until he re-enters the Zen of his art ("He didn't think of anything.") does he perform again with consummate skill, "And with a gesture of two arms he said / It was nothing."

There is a liturgy of time and place in the world of the circus—afternoon, the midday, evening, night. And at last the circus "Leaving the field of wonders darkened, / Leaving the air, where the tent stood, empty. . ." Here is a remarkable work, then, whose poetic statement is in direct relation to Gabriel Marcel's concept of *man's nuptial bond with being* ("Have you seen the noon-day banners / Of this wedding?").

Finally, so afraid have we become of the transference of emotion in modern poetry, that the only quarterly review I have seen of this poem, and one which ought to know better, timorously called it sentimental. Of course the Christian poet must now endure a double alienation. In the first place, any poet is alienated in our New World society, because our background is not really cultural at all, but pragmatic. The secular sensibility, moreover, has become so universal, in almost every aspect of modern life, that even the most celebrated Christian poet of our time stands more and more like a mute and lonely eminence. It is the considerable achievement of *The Circus of the Sun,* freely and openly considered, that it transcends both the inhibition of the social context and the coy demeanor of the official custodians. In short, it is a truly joyous work of art.

REVIEWERS

Daniel J. Callahan is a member of the faculty at Harvard and a regular contributor.

Bruce A. Cook has previously contributed articles, fiction and reviews to The Commonweal.

Thomas P. McDonnell, a frequent contributor, writes poetry and criticism for a number of American journals.

ART

American Painting, 1865-1905

THE ESSENTIAL flavor of American painting, those romantic, genre and bravura elements that in certain combinations seem to be indigenous and recognizable, may be found in almost any period of our artistic history and in as far-flung examples as Caleb Bingham or Jackson Pollock. If not "par excellence," the period when these elements are most distinct and distinguishable may well be the one when we had outgrown a certain provincial isolation and not yet fully embarked on the international scene—the period celebrated in the exhibit entitled *American Painting, 1865-1905.*

This modest and even artless-appearing exhibit, originally organized by the Art Gallery of Toronto and shown in Vancouver and Winnipeg, was on view at the Whitney Museum in N.Y.C. from May 17 to June 18. It omits at one end the overlapping Hudson River School and earlier portrait and genre painting in this country, and at the other end the Robert Henri group and pioneers of the modern movement in the U.S.; it is by these omissions, and by committing

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itself to a limited period when considerable talents burgeoned, rather than by the excellence of the examples chosen, that the exhibit achieved an illuminating consequence.

The romantic strain in American painting in this period became "a more personal romanticism," as Lloyd Goodrich remarks in his catalogue for the exhibit. This more personal quality is found in that compelling romantic visionary, Poe-like and Melville-like Albert Ryder, who is also one of the artists best served by the examples of his work in this show—the more admirable as his surviving paintings are so few.

Ryder's haunting poetic images and his penchant for abstract composition both emphasize his almost mystical personal inspiration: *Marine,* one of his moonstruck seascapes, is an almost-abstract composition of dark sail and cloud shapes, a triumph of this original American romantic as well as an intriguing foreshadow of contemporary abstract art. Ryder is not a romantic simply because of moonlit and poetic scenes, but because of his whole posture and technique; his paintings seem to have been painted by ear in response to an inner ecstatic melody.

It can be seen, too, that George Inness is another exponent of this more personal romanticism: one of his finest paintings *The Coming Storm* (lent by Buffalo's Albright Gallery to this exhibit) is a landscape swept by a lowering premonition; this subjective scene with its spirited, summary execution is a contrast to the former grandiose yet meticulous romanticism of the Hudson River School landscapes.

The genre tradition in this period became tinged with a personal romanticism too, at least in the two considerable artists who can be said to have assumed it as part of their inheritance—Eakins and Homer.

Thomas Eakins' so-called "scientific" realism often has a crude unassimilated air, but his plastic gifts were great and in paintings such as *The Pathetic Song* (Corcoran Gallery, Washington, D. C.) his forms are of a nobly expressive "genre." In *Sailboats Racing on the Delaware* (Philadelphia, Museum) he achieves an image of a hallucinatory moment of reality that is suffused with an intense personal emotion.

Homer is a much more baffling and paradoxical artist; in him the genre painter seems often to be at odds with the romantic artist and to blight the bloom of his paintings with incoherent intrusions. *Crack the Whip* (Butler Museum, Youngstown, Ohio) is not in my opinion one of his best genre paintings. I prefer those Long Island seaside scenes, more freely and variously composed; *Crack the Whip* is modified by the sentimental rather than the romantic. *The West Wind* is a grander Homer: the genre tradision has given way to the romantic, but apart from that it has all the freshness and vitality of his best work in a rare triumph of harmonious composition.

That "bravura" element in American painting referred to is perhaps better elucidated as being

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those audacious, instinctive, direct qualities that have maybe reached their culmination in action painting today. It was the best thing about Sargent. Homer had a good amount of it, particularly in his later work; Inness, a gentle quantity. It is part of Ryder's approach to art.

It was an element conspicuously lacking in Whistler, who was as doctrinaire as Eakins in an entirely different way. In Whistler most things are attenuated, but the romantic and even the genre tradition survive in him. Of his color, Lloyd Goodrich says "he limited his gamut to nuances," and this remark might be more generally applied to that theorist and expatriate whose real decorative talents so often seem diluted. A tiny oil, *Mrs. George Whitby Reading* (University of Glascow, Scotland), has a distilled distinction: the nuances of form and color suit the scale.

Mary Cassatt is so poorly represented in this exhibit that it seems hardly fair to include her at all. This Philadelphia-born artist may perhaps more properly be considered a French Impressionist; her absorption into that group and the influence and popularity of that school in our native art may furthermore be partly explained by its affinities to our genre tradition and direct painting tendencies. It seems a pity in any case that the best Cassatt in this exhibit, *Woman Reading In a Garden* (Art Institute of Chicago), lovely as it is, does not display her vigorous originality within that idiom.

The art of any country of course is the sum of its artists—but this sum is not so easily arrived at; the factors involved are as obstreperous as Alice's croquet equipment at the Red Queen's garden party. Flamingoes and hedgehogs are tractable compared to painters and sculptors, and the wickets you aim for are just as likely to get up and walk away. There is something distinct about American painting however, and the 1865-1905 era seems to offer the best chance of pondering this through a choice group of artists with the allusive imprimatur of their native land.

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